Local Assessment System:

Implementation and Development in Maine Schools

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IMPLEMENTATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN MAINE SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Introduction

In May 2003, the Maine Department of Education (MDOE) requested that the Center for Research and Evaluation (CRE) at the University of Maine assist the Department in assessing the implementation of Local Assessment Systems (LASs) in Maine's public schools. An LAS questionnaire was collaboratively designed as the primary instrument for this evaluation.

In June 2003, participants in assessment workshops that were conducted by MDOE in Portland, Augusta, and Bangor were asked to complete the LAS questionnaire. While there were "teams" of participants for many school administrative units (SAUs), only one survey per SAU was administered. Private schools that receive more than 60% of their funding from public school funds were also surveyed. School districts, both public and private, that did not have a representative present at any of the workshops were mailed a questionnaire. Data from respondents that participated in the workshops and from non-participating respondents are aggregated in the following analyses unless otherwise noted.

A representative from each of 157 SAUs and 11 private schools was surveyed. One hundred twenty-six surveys were distributed at the summer workshops, and 42 were mailed to non-participating districts. There were 111 questionnaires completed and returned by workshop participants, and 14 completed and returned by non-participants. This represents a return rate of 88% for the workshop participants and a 33% return rate for non-participants. The total return rate for the survey is 74% of those invited to attend the summer workshops.

Once the data were compiled, it was analyzed using SPSS software. The following report is an analysis of the development and implementation of Local Assessment Systems in Maine

school districts. Since the LASs of all school districts are constantly evolving, these results are presented as a snapshot of LAS progress as of June 2003.

The following report is divided into two parts. Part one consists of the frequency distribution for all items on the survey and is further subdivided in the following way: Section 1, Demographics; Section 2, Progress Toward Implementation; Section 3, Confidence in Meeting Target Dates; Section 4, Collaboration and Resources Utilized in Developing an LAS; and Section 5, Local Assessment System Challenges. Part two consists of a more in-depth examination of respondents' confidence levels in conjunction with selected items from the survey.

Part I

Section 1. Demographics

Respondents were asked to identify the superintendent region in which their school administrative unit (SAU) was located. In the table below, the "n" column represents the number of SAUs from each region that responded to the survey. The "%" column represents the respondents as a percentage of the total number of SAUs in each region. Hancock County is the most underrepresented with only 36% of the SAUs in that region responding to the survey.

Table 1. Superintendent Region in Which the SAU Resides

	n	%
Aroostook County	14	70.0
Cumberland County	18	85.7
Hancock County	4	36.3
Penquis	23	82.1
Midcoast	16	88.8
Kennebec Valley	14	56.0
Washington County	7	70.0
Western Maine	15	83.3
York	12	75.0
Unorganized territories	1	100.0

One respondent did not answer this item.

Data were collected regarding the grade levels included in the SAU and the student population. Table 2 illustrates that the majority of the respondents (75%) represented SAUs that included grades K-12.

Table 2. Grades Included in the SAU

	n	%
K-12	94	75.2
K-8	22	17.6
K-4 or 5 or 6	3	2.4
5-8 or 6-8	1	.8
9-12	4	3.2
Middle and High School	1	.8

Respondents were asked to identify the student enrollment in their SAU. The data gathered from the survey were compared to the workshop participant list to confirm accuracy. Non-participating respondents appear to represent a higher percentage of SAUs with smaller student populations. Tables 3a, 3b, and 3c present this information.

Table 3a. Number of SAUs by Student Enrollment - All Respondents

	n	%
Fewer than 200	12	9.7
201-400	12	9.7
401-850	25	20.2
851-2000	41	33.1
More than 2000	34	27.4

One respondent did not answer this item.

Table 3b. Number of SAUs by Student Enrollment - Non-Participating Respondents

	n	%
Fewer than 200	3	21.4
201-400	2	14.3
401-850	4	28.6
851-2000	1	7.1
More than 2000	4	28.6

Table 3c. Number of SAUs by Student Enrollment - Participating Respondents

	n	%
Fewer than 200	9	8.2
201-400	10	9.1
401-850	21	19.1
851-2000	40	36.4
More than 2000	30	27.3

One respondent did not answer this item.

Respondents were asked to indicate how many individuals from their SAU were present at the workshop. Table 4 illustrates that approximately three quarters of respondents (77%) indicated there were three, four, or five individuals from their SAU attending the workshop.

Table 4. Number of Participants from Each SAU at the Workshops

	n	%
1 Person	4	3.6
2 People	5	4.5
3 People	19	17.1
4 People	46	41.4
5 People	20	18.0
6 People	14	12.6
7 People	2	1.8
13 People	1	.9

These figures are based only on the 111 surveys returned by workshop participants.

Respondents were also asked to identify the roles or administrative structures that are in place in their SAU to support the work of developing an LAS. After identifying a specific role or administrative structure, the respondents then rated the extent to which each was involved in implementing the LAS. The resulting data are presented in Table 5. Identification of role or administrative structure is based on 100%, while the rating percentages are based on the number of participants that identified a specific role. Consequently, rating percentages should not be compared across roles. Readers are also cautioned when interpreting this table that just over 10% of respondents did not indicate there was a principal or superintendent in their SAU. Of the respondents that indicated an "other" role or administrative structure was in place, many identified *classroom teachers* as being extensively involved in developing the LAS. The data indicate that curriculum coordinators, principals, local assessment teams, and curriculum committees are the most frequently occurring and most extensively involved personnel in implementing the LAS in the responding SAUs.

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Table 5. Roles or Structures in Place and Extent of Involvement in Developing an LAS

	Role or structure identified		No involvement		2		3		Extensive involvement	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Assessment specialist	44	35.2%	16	12.8%	7	5.6%	6	4.8%	15	12.0%
Assistant superintendent	48	38.4%	22	17.6%	2	1.6%	3	2.4%	21	16.8%
Communications personnel	32	25.6%	19	15.2%	5	4.0%	6	4.8%	2	1.6%
Content leader	65	52.0%	11	8.8%	10	8.0%	11	8.8%	33	26.4%
Curriculum committee	90	72.0%	9	7.2%	18	14.4%	15	12.0%	48	38.4%
Curriculum coordinator	80	64.0%	9	7.2%	1	.8%	7	5.6%	63	50.4%
Data management specialist	59	47.2%	12	9.6%	19	15.2%	18	14.4%	10	8.0%
K-12 content area team	65	52.0%	8	6.4%	7	5.6%	22	17.6%	28	22.4%
Local assessment team	83	66.4%	4	3.2%	9	7.2%	19	15.2%	51	40.8%
Principal	111	88.8%	3	2.4%	25	20.0%	31	24.8%	52	41.6%
Superintendent	111	88.8%	14	11.2%	33	26.4%	30	24.0%	34	27.2%
Other	41	32.8%	1	.8%	8	6.4%	8	6.4%	24	19.2%
Other	15	12.0%	2	1.6%	2	1.6%	7	5.6%	4	3.2%

Section 2. Progress Toward Implementation

Each SAU representative was asked to rate the progress made in his/her district toward LAS implementation in each content area and for specific LAS development activities. Tables 6a, 6b, and 6c present the progress made in the content areas by grade span. As would be expected, because of prescribed target dates, the most progress for all three grade spans has been in either English/Language Arts or Mathematics. For the other six content areas listed, in both the K-4 and 5-8 grade spans, less than 30% of respondents indicated the work was "partially complete" or "complete" with the exception of Health and Physical Education in the K-4 grade span. Progress made in the 9-12 grade span is higher than the progress made in the other two grade spans.

Table 6a. SAU's Progress in Content Areas for K-4 Grade Span

	No action taken		Planning in progress		Partially complete		Work complete	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
English/Language Arts	9	7.6%	35	29.7%	70	59.3%	4	3.4%
Mathematics	13	11.0%	45	38.1%	55	46.6%	5	4.2%
Science and Technology	36	30.8%	58	49.6%	22	18.8%	1	.9%
Social Studies	40	33.6%	58	48.7%	20	16.8%	1	.8%
Health and Physical Education	29	24.8%	53	45.3%	31	26.5%	4	3.4%
Modern and Classical Languages	79	70.5%	31	27.7%	1	.9%	1	.9%
Visual and Performing Arts	58	50.0%	42	36.2%	14	12.1%	2	1.7%
Career Preparation	84	71.8%	27	23.1%	6	5.1%		

Table 6b. SAU's Progress in Content Areas for 5-8 Grade Span

	No action taken		Planning in progress		Partially complete		Work complete	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
English/Language Arts	7	6.0%	45	38.5%	62	53.0%	3	2.6%
Mathematics	9	7.6%	48	40.7%	58	49.2%	3	2.5%
Science and Technology	26	22.4%	61	52.6%	28	24.1%	1	.9%
Social Studies	28	23.9%	63	53.8%	25	21.4%	1	.9%
Health and Physical Education	26	22.6%	56	48.7%	31	27.0%	2	1.7%
Modern and Classical Languages	67	59.3%	36	31.9%	9	8.0%	1	.9%
Visual and Performing Arts	53	46.5%	45	39.5%	15	13.2%	1	.9%
Career Preparation	71	62.3%	35	30.7%	8	7.0%		

Table 6c. SAU's Progress in Content Areas for 9-12 Grade Span

	No action taken		Planning in progress		Partially complete		Work complete	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
English/Language Arts	6	6.7%	30	33.7%	46	51.7%	7	7.9%
Mathematics	9	9.4%	38	39.6%	45	46.9%	4	4.2%
Science and Technology	13	13.7%	47	49.5%	31	32.6%	4	4.2%
Social Studies	14	14.4%	50	51.5%	29	29.9%	4	4.1%
Health and Physical Education	15	15.8%	42	44.2%	36	37.9%	2	2.1%
Modern and Classical Languages	34	35.4%	43	44.8%	16	16.7%	3	3.1%
Visual and Performing Arts	35	36.8%	41	43.2%	16	16.8%	3	3.2%
Career Preparation	45	47.4%	39	41.1%	11	11.6%		

Tables 7a, 7b, and 7c present the progress made in the specific tasks related to development of an LAS by grade span. It was assumed that respondents were already familiar with most of these activities. For all three grade spans, the item with which respondents indicated they had made the most progress was "Developed curriculum documents aligned with Learning Results…" The two areas in which the least amount of progress had been made for all three grade spans was "Identifying at least 75% of assessments as common" and "Identifying up to 25% of assessments as classroom."

Table 7a.   SAU's Progress on Specific Tasks for K-4 Grade Span

	No action taken		Planning in progress		Partially complete		Work complete	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Selected a sampling of performance indicators to assess	42	35.3%	35	29.4%	29	24.4%	13	10.9%
Identified a minimum of 8-12 assessments for each grade span and content	31	26.3%	46	39.0%	37	31.4%	4	3.4%
Verified that collection of assessments samples every content standard	49	41.5%	39	33.1%	23	19.5%	7	5.9%
Planned to measure each content cluster five times	60	50.4%	42	35.3%	14	11.8%	3	2.5%
Planned a variety of assessment types across each discipline	32	27.4%	44	37.6%	37	31.6%	4	3.4%
Identified at least 75% of assessments as common	54	47.0%	32	27.8%	17	14.8%	12	10.4%
Identified up to 25% of our assessments as classroom	72	64.3%	26	23.2%	10	8.9%	4	3.6%
Provided training in common scoring for teacher's professional development	7	6.0%	25	21.4%	69	59.0%	16	13.7%
Put plan in place to administer assessments at the classroom, school, and SAU level	21	18.1%	49	42.2%	38	32.8%	8	6.9%
Aligned assessments with curriculum and performance indicators from Learning Results	15	12.7%	41	34.7%	48	40.7%	14	11.9%
Developed curriculum documents aligned with Learning Results in five content areas named above	2	1.7%	19	16.2%	58	49.6%	38	32.5%
Provided teachers opportunity to review and analyze MEA data to make decisions re: curric., instruction and assessement	6	5.2%	22	19.0%	52	44.8%	36	31.0%

Table 7b. SAU's Progress on Specific Tasks for 5-8 Grade Span

	No action taken		Planning in progress		Partially complete		Work complete	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Selected a sampling of performance indicators to assess	42	35.9%	34	29.1%	29	24.8%	12	10.3%
Identified a minimum of 8-12 assessments for each grade span and content	33	28.4%	45	38.8%	34	29.3%	4	3.4%
Verified that collection of assessments samples every content standard	50	43.1%	38	32.8%	22	19.0%	6	5.2%
Planned to measure each content cluster five times	58	50.0%	40	34.5%	15	12.9%	3	2.6%
Planned a variety of assessment types across each discipline	30	26.3%	45	39.5%	36	31.6%	3	2.6%
Identified at least 75% of assessments as common	52	46.8%	31	27.9%	16	14.4%	12	10.8%
Identified up to 25% of our assessments as classroom	68	63.6%	26	24.3%	9	8.4%	4	3.7%
Provided training in common scoring for teacher's professional development	10	8.8%	24	21.1%	68	59.6%	12	10.5%
Put plan in place to administer assessments at the classroom, school, and SAU level	21	18.6%	47	41.6%	37	32.7%	8	7.1%
Aligned assessments with curriculum and performance indicators from Learning Results	17	14.7%	38	32.8%	47	40.5%	14	12.1%
Developed curriculum documents aligned with Learning Results in five content areas named above	1	.9%	18	15.5%	59	50.9%	38	32.8%
Provided teachers opportunity to review and analyze MEA data to make decisions re: curric., instruction and assessement	5	4.4%	22	19.5%	52	46.0%	34	30.1%

Table 7c. SAU's Progress on Specific Tasks for 9-12 Grade Span

	No action taken		Planning in progress		Partially complete		Work complete	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Selected a sampling of performance indicators to assess	26	27.7%	28	29.8%	29	30.9%	11	11.7%
Identified a minimum of 8-12 assessments for each grade span and content	20	20.8%	37	38.5%	32	33.3%	7	7.3%
Verified that collection of assessments samples every content standard	35	36.5%	30	31.3%	21	21.9%	10	10.4%
Planned to measure each content cluster five times	47	49.0%	33	34.4%	12	12.5%	4	4.2%
Planned a variety of assessment types across each discipline	22	22.9%	35	36.5%	33	34.4%	6	6.3%
Identified at least 75% of assessments as common	41	44.6%	28	30.4%	12	13.0%	11	12.0%
Identified up to 25% of our assessments as classroom	53	59.6%	24	27.0%	9	10.1%	3	3.4%
Provided training in common scoring for teacher's professional development	12	12.8%	29	30.9%	41	43.6%	12	12.8%
Put plan in place to administer assessments at the classroom, school, and SAU level	14	15.1%	41	44.1%	30	32.3%	8	8.6%
Aligned assessments with curriculum and performance indicators from Learning Results	11	11.5%	26	27.1%	42	43.8%	17	17.7%
Developed curriculum documents aligned with Learning Results in five content areas named above	2	2.1%	11	11.7%	43	45.7%	38	40.4%
Provided teachers opportunity to review and analyze MEA data to make decisions re: curric., instruction and assessement	4	4.3%	25	26.6%	37	39.4%	28	29.8%

The activities presented in Tables 8a, 8b, and 8c were assumed to be new concepts or ideas for the respondents. Of the six new concept items rated, a high percentage of respondents indicated that no action had been taken on four of them. As expected, the "no action taken" percentages were much higher for the new concept items than for the items previously presented in Tables 7a, 7b, and 7c. In all three grade spans, approximately 50% of respondents indicated their SAU's progress in developing a plan for on-going professional development was either "partially complete" or "complete."

Table 8a. SAU's Progress on Specific Tasks for K-4 Grade Span (new concepts)

	No action taken		Planning in progress		Partially complete		Work complete	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Developed policy for replacement assessments	108	90.8%	8	6.7%	2	1.7%	1	.8%
Developed replacement assessment tasks	103	86.6%	11	9.2%	5	4.2%		
Selected one of the performance standards methods from LAS guide	84	71.8%	21	17.9%	7	6.0%	5	4.3%
Developed procedure for public reporting of scores at required levels for certification	82	70.1%	27	23.1%	5	4.3%	3	2.6%
Developed understanding of standards-based system	7	5.9%	48	40.3%	53	44.5%	11	9.2%
Developed plan for on-going professional development	10	8.5%	47	40.2%	42	35.9%	18	15.4%

Table 8b. SAU's Progress on Specific Tasks for 5-8 Grade Span (new concepts)

	No action taken		Planning in progress		Partially complete		Work complete	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Developed policy for replacement assessments	105	90.5%	8	6.9%	2	1.7%	1	.9%
Developed replacement assessment tasks	100	86.2%	11	9.5%	5	4.3%		
Selected one of the performance standards methods from LAS guide	82	72.6%	19	16.8%	7	6.2%	5	4.4%
Developed procedure for public reporting of scores at required levels for certification	81	70.4%	27	23.5%	5	4.3%	2	1.7%
Developed understanding of standards-based system	7	6.0%	49	41.9%	51	43.6%	10	8.5%
Developed plan for on-going professional development	11	9.8%	48	42.9%	37	33.0%	16	14.3%

Table 8c. SAU's Progress on Specific Tasks for 9-12 Grade Span (new concepts)

	No action taken		Planning in progress		Partially complete		Work complete	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Developed policy for replacement assessments	83	86.5%	7	7.3%	4	4.2%	2	2.1%
Developed replacement assessment tasks	81	84.4%	7	7.3%	7	7.3%	1	1.0%
Selected one of the performance standards methods from LAS guide	67	71.3%	16	17.0%	6	6.4%	5	5.3%
Developed procedure for public reporting of scores at required levels for certification	64	67.4%	24	25.3%	4	4.2%	3	3.2%
Developed understanding of standards-based system	10	10.3%	31	32.0%	46	47.4%	10	10.3%
Developed plan for on-going professional development	14	14.6%	37	38.5%	33	34.4%	12	12.5%

Respondents were also asked to identify the extent to which their SAU was prepared to assess the progress of students with disabilities/ESL/504 (students in special education programs, those in programs for English as a Second Language, and students with disabilities served under section 504) toward achieving the *Learning Results*. The results presented in Table 9 indicate that planning is in progress or partially complete for a majority of districts in providing assessment with accommodations or alternative assessments (PAAP).

Table 9. SAU's Progress on Assessing Students with Disabilities/ESL/504

	No action taken		Planning in progress		Partially complete		Work complete		Don't know	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Assessment with accommodations	15	12.1%	54	43.5%	43	34.7%	11	8.9%	1	.8%
Alternate assessment (PAAP)	13	10.6%	49	39.8%	46	37.4%	13	10.6%	2	1.6%

Respondents were asked to rate the degree of development of curriculum and assessments to be used for this year's ninth grade students (Class of 2007) in English/Language Arts and

Mathematics. Approximately 75% of respondents rated their SAU's progress as either "partially complete" or "complete" in developing the curriculum for both content areas. Roughly 50% of respondents rated their SAU's progress in developing assessments as either "partially complete" or "complete." This information is presented in Tables 10a and 10b.

Table 10a. SAU's Progress in English/Language Arts for Ninth Grade Students

	No action taken		Planning in progress		Partially complete		Work complete	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Developing curriculum	4	4.1%	16	16.3%	34	34.7%	44	44.9%
Developing assessments	8	8.7%	36	39.1%	34	37.0%	14	15.2%

Table 10b. SAU's Progress in Mathematics for Ninth Grade Students

	No action taken		Planning in progress		Partially complete		Work complete	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Developing curriculum	4	4.1%	19	19.4%	38	38.8%	37	37.8%
Developing assessments	14	14.9%	34	36.2%	35	37.2%	11	11.7%

Section 3. Confidence in Meeting Target Dates

School administrative units are to establish an LAS, as defined by Chapter 127, in English/Language Arts and Mathematics by the end of the 2003-2004 school year for each grade span. Respondents indicated their level of confidence in meeting the target date, and results are displayed for each grade span in Tables 11a, 11b, and 11c. The confidence levels of all three grade spans are remarkably similar. Approximately 10% of respondents indicated they were "not confident at all" while the remaining 90% were fairly evenly distributed among the other three categories.

Table 11a. SAU's Confidence in Establishing an LAS by June 2004 for K-4 Grade Span

	Not at all confident		2		3		Very confident	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
English/Language Arts	8	6.8%	29	24.8%	42	35.9%	38	32.5%
Mathematics	11	9.5%	36	31.0%	30	25.9%	39	33.6%

Table 11b. SAU's Confidence in Establishing an LAS by June 2004 for 5-8 Grade Span

	Not at all confident		2		3		Very confident	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
English/Language Arts	10	8.5%	33	28.2%	42	35.9%	32	27.4%
Mathematics	10	8.6%	36	31.0%	37	31.9%	33	28.4%

Table 11c. SAU's Confidence in Establishing an LAS by June 2004 for 9-12 Grade Span

	Not at all confident		2		3		Very confident	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
English/Language Arts	9	9.7%	27	29.0%	26	28.0%	31	33.3%
Mathematics	12	13.0%	27	29.3%	25	27.2%	28	30.4%

Respondents indicated how confident they felt in being able to certify that high school graduates in 2007 will have met requirements of the *Learning Results* in English/Language Arts and Mathematics. Note that only 99 of the respondents were from an SAU that included high school students. These results are presented in Table 12, and slightly over 60% indicated a high level of confidence on the four-point scale.

Table 12. SAU's Confidence in Being Able to Certify 2007 Graduates Have Met Requirements

	Not at all confident		2		3		Very confident	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Learning Results requirements in English/ Language Arts and Mathematics.	12	12.6%	25	26.3%	34	36%	24	25.3%

Four respondents did not answer this item.

Section 4. Collaboration and Resources Utilized in Developing an LAS

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they were collaborating with other SAUs or would like to collaborate and what resources they have used or would like to use in developing an LAS. Tables 13 and 14a present the distribution of SAUs *currently* collaborating with other districts for the purpose of developing an LAS and the distribution of those *interested* in doing so. The distribution of "yes" and "no" ratings by participating and non-participating respondents were virtually the same regarding current collaboration status. Most districts are not collaborating. Tables 14b and 14c illustrate a disparity in response patterns between participating respondents and non-participating respondents with regard to "willingness to collaborate." Caution is advised when interpreting Tables 14b and 14c given the small sample size of non-participating respondents.

Table 13. Current Collaboration Status

	Yes		No	
	n	%	n	%
Is your SAU currently collaborating with another SAU for the purpose of developing an LAS?	37	30.1%	86	69.9%

Table 14a. Willingness to Collaborate --All Respondents

	Yes		No	
	n	%	n	%
Would your SAU be interested in collaborating with another SAU?	48	59.3%	33	40.7%

Table 14b. Willingness to Collaborate --Non-Participating Respondents

	n	%
Yes	7	100.0

One respondent did not answer this item.

Table 14c. Willingness to Collaborate --Participating Respondents

	n	%
Yes	41	55.4
No	33	44.6

Respondents were instructed to select two items from a list to indicate which type of "shared work time" would be most beneficial to their SAUs. Table 15 illustrates that the majority of respondents (85%) felt the most beneficial shared work time experience would be among teachers in grade spans and specific content areas.

Table 15. Most Valued "Shared Work Time" Experience

Shared work time...	Not checked		Checked	
	n	%	n	%
among teachers in grade spans and specific content areas	19	15.2%	106	84.8%
among teachers in grade spans across content areas	82	65.6%	43	34.4%
within content areas across your SAU	65	52.0%	60	48.0%
with other SAUs	105	84.0%	20	16.0%
Other	118	94.4%	7	5.6%

Respondents were asked to identify all public or private agencies that had been or would be assisting their SAU in developing an LAS; results are presented in Table 16. Clearly, a large percentage (87%) of SAUs are or will be utilizing the Maine Department of Education in developing an LAS. A majority of respondents (68%) also indicated that regional partnerships are or will be a resource for their SAU.

Table 16. Public and Private Agencies Utilized by SAU's in Developing an LAS

	Yes		No	
	n	%	n	%
Regional partnerships	85	68.0%	40	32.0%
College or University courses	27	21.6%	98	78.4%
Private consultants	61	48.8%	64	51.2%
Maine Department of Education	109	87.2%	16	12.8%
Nonprofit organization	21	16.8%	104	83.2%
Other	20	16.0%	105	84.0%

Table 17a illustrates the distribution of districts currently using specific, web-based assistance provided by the Maine Department of Education; 17b illustrates the perceived usefulness of these websites. A large majority of respondents indicated they had used the websites, with nearly 75% of those respondents rating the sites as useful.

Table 17a. SAU's Use of Specific Websites in Developing an LAS

	Yes		No	
	n	%	n	%
Maine Assessment Portfolio (MAP) website	115	94.3%	7	5.7%
Local Assessment Development (LAD) website	103	87.3%	15	12.7%

Table 17b. SAU's Perceived Usefulness of Specific Websites

	Not at all useful		2		3		Very useful	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Maine Assessment Portfolio (MAP) website	1	1.0%	32	31.1%	45	43.7%	25	24.3%
Local Assessment Development (LAD) website	3	3.3%	20	22.2%	42	46.7%	25	27.8%

Section 5. Local Assessment System Challenges

Respondents were asked to choose one task from a list of 12 that was the most challenging for their SAU. The list of tasks, along with the number of SAUs identifying that task as a "challenge," is illustrated in Table 18. Respondents were instructed to choose one task from the list. Twelve respondents choose more than one task, and their responses were included

Table 18. Distribution of "Most Challenging" Task Identified from Defined List

	n
Selected a sampling of the performance indicators to assess using Maine's Balance of Representation or some other method of prioritization	7
Identified a minimum of 8-12 assessments for each grade span and content area	20
Verified that the collection of assessments samples every content standard	5
Planned to measure each content cluster five times	7
Planned a variety of assessment types across each discipline	7
Identified at least 75% of our assessments as common	8
Identified up to 25% of our assessments as classroom	4
Provided training in common scoring for teachers' professional development	11
Put a plan in place to administer assessments at the classroom, school, and school administrative unit level	12
Aligned assessments with the curriculum and performance indicators from Maine's Learning Results	7
Developed curriculum documents aligned with Maine's Learning Results in the five content areas named above	7
Provided the opportunity for teachers to review and analyze data from the MEA to make decisions regarding curriculum, instruction, and assessment	5

in the overall count. Six respondents identified more than two tasks; their responses were deleted. Thirty respondents did not answer this item.

Identifying a minimum of 8-12 assessments for each grade span and content area was identified most frequently as the most challenging LAS task.

Respondents were provided with another list of LAS tasks, six total, in which they were instructed to identify the two with which they needed immediate help; results are presented in Table 19. One respondent did not identify any task as "requiring assistance." Nine respondents indicated more than two tasks and were not included in the count below.

Table 19. Tasks Identified by SAU as Requiring the Most Immediate Assistance

	n
Create assessment tasks for specific content area	40
Create assessment tasks for specific grade span	23
Plot assessment tasks on a template to meet distribution rules	16
Align curriculum with assessments	15
Develop communication and reporting strategies	49
Create an action plan to implement a standards-based curriculum, instruction, assessment system	35
Create replacement tasks	27
Other	12

Developing communication and reporting strategies and creating assessment tasks for specific content areas were the LAS tasks most frequently identified as requiring the most immediate assistance.

Respondents were asked to provide their opinion about how well students and parents were informed of 2007 graduation requirements; results are illustrated in Table 20. While it appears that students are slightly more informed than parents, more than half of the respondents indicated students and parents were not informed at a very high level.

Table 20. Parent and Student Knowledge of 2007 Graduation Requirements

In respondent's opinion.....	Not at all informed		2		3		Very informed	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
How well informed are parents of incoming ninth grade students.	34	34.3%	38	38.4%	19	19.2%	8	8.1%
How well informed are incoming ninth grade students.	20	20.0%	44	44.0%	24	24.0%	12	12.0%

Part II

A more in-depth examination was conducted utilizing the SAU's confidence level in establishing an LAS, as defined by Chapter 127, by the end of the 2003-2004 school year (referred to in the following tables as "Confidence") in English/Language Arts and Mathematics as a key variable. Analyses were conducted to determine the relationship between an SAU's demographic characteristics and its confidence level in establishing an LAS within the given timeframe. Additional analyses were conducted to determine if the relationship between an SAU's confidence level and its reported progress on various tasks.

For ease of interpretation, some analyses were conducted using a recoded confidence level score; the first two points on the scale were coded as "1" indicating a lower level of confidence, and the last two points on the scale were coded as "2" indicating a higher level of confidence.   Although confidence levels were reported for each of the three grade spans and two content areas, for some analyses either the grade spans or content areas were collapsed since the confidence levels among the grade spans and between the content areas were highly correlated.

Tables 21a and 21b illustrate the high correlation between grade spans with regard to an SAU's confidence level in establishing an LAS within the given timeframe for English/Language Arts and for Mathematics. These data indicate that if a respondent was confident at one grade span, he/she was likely to indicate the same level of confidence at the other two grade spans.

Table 21a. Correlation between Grade Spans for Confidence in English/Language Arts

		K-4 English/Language Arts	5-8 English/Language Arts	9-12 English/Language Arts
K-4	Pearson Correlation	1	.930**	.772**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
	N	117	115	88
5-8	Pearson Correlation	.930**	1	.815**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
	N	115	117	89
9-12	Pearson Correlation	.772**	.815**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
	N	88	89	93

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 21b. Correlation between Grade Spans for Confidence in Mathematics

		K-4 Mathematics	5-8 Mathematics	9-12 Mathematics
K-4	Pearson Correlation	1	.919**	.635**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
	N	116	114	87
5-8	Pearson Correlation	.919**	1	.762**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
	N	114	116	88
9-12	Pearson Correlation	.635**	.762**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
	N	87	88	92

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Confidence levels in establishing an LAS for English/Language Arts and for Mathematics were also highly correlated, $r = .846$ ($p < .01$) for grade span K-4; $r = .898$ ($p < .01$) for grade span 5-8; and $r = .821$ ($p < .01$) for grade span 9-12. If a respondent indicated a high level of confidence in one content area, it is likely that he/she also indicated a high level of confidence in the other content area.

Section 1. Demographics by Confidence Level

To examine the relationship between the region in which the SAU was located and the relative confidence level, the confidence variable was collapsed into a dichotomous variable. With the exception of Hancock and Washington Counties, more than half of the SAUs in each region indicated they had a relatively high level of confidence in establishing an LAS at each of the grade spans. Notice should be taken that there were fewer respondents representing Hancock and Washington Counties than the other regions. Tables 22a, 22b, and 22c illustrate this information.

Table 22a. Confidence Level by Region for K-4 Grade Span

	Less Confident		More Confident	
	n	%	n	%
Aroostook County	3	23.1%	10	76.9%
Cumberland County	4	23.5%	13	76.5%
Hancock County	3	75.0%	1	25.0%
Penquis	8	36.4%	14	63.6%
Midcoast	5	33.3%	10	66.7%
Kennebec Valley	5	35.7%	9	64.3%
Washington County	2	40.0%	3	60.0%
Western Maine	4	30.8%	9	69.2%
York	3	25.0%	9	75.0%
Unorganized territories	1	100%	0	0%

Table 22b. Confidence Level by Region for 5-8 Grade Span

	Less Confident		More Confident	
	n	%	n	%
Aroostook County	4	28.6%	10	71.4%
Cumberland County	4	22.2%	14	77.8%
Hancock County	3	75.0%	1	25.0%
Penquis	8	36.4%	14	63.6%
Midcoast	5	33.3%	10	66.7%
Kennebec Valley	7	50.0%	7	50.0%
Washington County	1	25.0%	3	75.0%
Western Maine	4	33.3%	8	66.7%
York	3	25.0%	9	75.0%
Unorganized territories	1	100%	0	0%

Table 22c. Confidence Level by Region for 9-12 Grade Span

	Less Confident		More Confident	
	n	%	n	%
Aroostook County	2	15.4%	11	84.6%
Cumberland County	6	40.0%	9	60.0%
Hancock County	1	33.3%	2	66.7%
Penquis	7	46.7%	8	53.3%
Midcoast	5	50.0%	5	50.0%
Kennebec Valley	5	41.7%	7	58.3%
Washington County	3	60.0%	2	40.0%
Western Maine	3	27.3%	8	72.7%
York	3	30.0%	7	70.0%
Unorganized territories	0	.0%	0	.0%

There was no significant correlation between an SAU's student enrollment and their confidence level in establishing an LAS at either of the content areas or among any of the grade spans.

The relationship between confidence levels and the total number of roles and/or administrative structures that a respondent indicated as having a high level of involvement in

implementing an LAS in their SAU was also examined. There was a significant correlation at the K-4 grade span, $r = .294$ ($p < .01$) and at the 5-8 grade span, $r = .273$ ($p < .01$). While there was a statistically significant relationship, it should be noted that the overall number of roles/administrative structures with a large amount of involvement accounts for less than 10% of the variance in confidence levels which diminishes the importance of this statistically significant finding. There was no relationship at the 9-12 grade span.

Section 2. Progress by Confidence Levels

Analyses were conducted to determine if there was a relationship between the SAU's confidence level and the reported progress on various tasks. While confidence levels are based only on the content areas of English/Language Arts and Mathematics, progress reports on specific tasks are based on the three additional content areas of Science and Technology, Social Studies, and Health and Physical Education. Even with the discrepancy in content areas, there was a significant correlation between level of progress on certain tasks and confidence level at all three grades spans. This indicates that if a respondent reported a relatively high level of confidence in meeting the target date, he/she was likely to indicate that the progress level for completing the various tasks was relatively high as well. The following three tables present the relationships at each grade span.

Table 23a. Correlation between Confidence and Progress at the K-4 Grade Span

		Confidence level	Progress Level
Confidence Level	Pearson Correlation	1	.435*:
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	103	103
	Pearson Correlation **		

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 23b. Correlation between Confidence and Progress at the 5-8 Grade Span

		Confidence level	Progress level
Confidence level	Pearson Correlation	1	.448*:
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	103	102
	Pearson Correlation	**	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 23c. Correlation between Confidence and Progress at the 9-12 Grade Span

		Confidence level	Progress level
Confidence level	Pearson Correlation	1	.405*:
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	85	85
	Pearson Correlation	**	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Summary

Data were collected from representatives of public and private schools in Maine to assess the development and implementation of Local Assessment Systems (LASs). A questionnaire was used to measure the School Administrative Unit's (SAU) progress in developing an LAS and level of confidence in their ability to establish an LAS, as defined by Chapter 127, by the end of the 2003-2004 school year in English/Language Arts and Mathematics. The questionnaire was also designed to determine which aspects of the LAS development are the most and least challenging to the school districts. Respondents from 125 SAUs or private schools completed the survey representing a return rate of 74% of those invited to attend the summer workshops. Below is a brief summary of the findings as of June 2003.

PROGRESS

> As would be expected, because of prescribed target dates, the most progress in implementing an LAS for all three grade spans has been in either English/Language Arts or Mathematics. (Tables 6a, 6b, 6c)

> For all three grade spans, K-4, 5-8 and 9-12, the task with which respondents indicated they had made the most progress was developing "…curriculum documents aligned with *Learning Results* in five content areas." (Tables 7a, 7b, 7c)

> The two tasks in which the least amount of progress had been made for all three grade spans was "identifying at least 75% of assessments as common" and "identifying up to 25% of assessments as classroom." (Tables 7a, 7b, 7c)

> Approximately 70%-90% of the respondents across three grade spans indicated that no action had been taken on the tasks related to replacement assessments, public reporting, and selecting one of the performance standards methods from the *LAS Guide*. (Tables 8a, 8b, 8c)

CONFIDENCE

> Ninety percent of respondents indicated some degree of confidence in the ability of their SAU to establish an LAS in English/Language Arts and Mathematics by the end of the 2003-2004 school year. Only 10% indicated that they were "not at all confident." (Tables 11a, 11b, 11c)

Ninety percent of the respondents indicated some degree of confidence that their SAU would be able to certify that high school graduates in 2007 will have met the requirements of the *Learning Results*. Approximately 10% indicated that they were not confident at all. (Table 12)

If a respondent indicated he/she was confident in establishing an LAS for English/Language Arts at one of the grade spans, he/she was likely to be confident in establishing an LAS in Mathematics as well at the same grade span. (Tables 21, 21b)

If a respondent indicated confidence in an SAU's ability to establish an LAS for English/Language Arts or Mathematics in the given timeframe at one grade span, he/she was likely to indicate confidence in the other two grade spans as well. (Tables 21, 21b)

There was no significant correlation between an SAU's student enrollment and their confidence level in establishing an LAS at either of the content areas or among any of the grade spans. (Tables 22a, 22b, 22c)

The SAUs' reported progress level was highly correlated with their confidence level for all three grade spans. This suggests that the SAU personnel are planning their work carefully and are cognizant of the time needed to complete the remaining tasks. (Tables 23a, 23b, 23c)

The total number of roles/administrative structures identified in an SAU as having *extensive involvement* in implementing the LAS had a relatively weak relationship with the SAU's confidence level in establishing an LAS. (Table 5)

COLLABORATION AND RESOURCE UTILIZATION

Less than one third of respondents (30%) indicated their SAU was currently collaborating with another SAU for the purpose of developing an LAS. Of the 70% that are not currently collaborating, more than half (60%) indicated they would like to collaborate. (Tables 13, 14a, 14b, 14c)

The majority of respondents (85%) indicated that the most valued "share work time" experience would be among teachers in grade spans and specific content areas. (Table 15)

A large majority of respondents indicated they had used the Maine Assessment Portfolio website (94%) and the Local Assessment Development website (87%). Approximately 75% of those respondents rated the sites as useful. (Tables 17a, 17b)

CHALLENGES

 According to the respondents, the most challenging task of designing and implementing an LAS was identifying "…a minimum of 8-12 assessments for each grade span." (Table 18)

The task identified as requiring the most immediate assistance by 43% of the respondents was developing "… communication and reporting strategies." (Table 19)

The majority of respondents indicated that neither parents or students are well informed about the graduation requirements for 2007, though students are somewhat more informed than parents. (Table 20)